

Conservation Commission
Minutes
October 18, 2016
Grange Meeting Room Boxborough Town Hall 29 Middle Rd.

Members present: Charlene Golden, Norm Hanover, David Koonce, Dennis Reip, Stephen Schmitt, and Hoff Stuart.

Member absent: David Follett

Dennis called the meeting to order at 7:40 pm.

The Commission welcomed new member Stephen Schmitt.

Approval of October 5, 2016 minutes postponed until the next meeting.

Motion was made by Dennis, seconded by Charlene and voted unanimously to approve the payment of \$40.24 to Concord Lumber.

Hoff reported on a meeting with the Recreation Commission and Board of Selectmen representative regarding management issues at Flerra Meadows. Questions were raised at the meeting regarding locations of picnic tables and who has the responsibility for "infrastructure", such as replacement of playground equipment.

Discussion: horse manure on trails

A number of complaints have been received recently that there is an excessive amount of horse manure on the trails in the Beaver Brook Meadows, Steele Farm, and Picnic Trust parcels. Only Beaver Brook Meadows is under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission. Dennis reported that he visited the area recently and confirmed the validity of the complaints. Vince Amoroso, Selectman, was present along with Ed Whitcomb and Bruce Hager of the Steele Farm Advisory Committee.

Dennis further reported that he revisited the area this last Sunday and that there had been a noticeable improvement on Beaver Brook Meadows. Ed Whitcomb reported that the problem seems to be less severe on Steele farm.

Kathy Breuer reported seeing a great deal of manure on the trail leading into community gardens from Middle Road.

Dennis read an email from Ken Morse expressing his opinion that horse riders should be held to the same standards as dog walkers. Arden Velej responded that in his opinion cleaning up after a horse can be very difficult. Another citizen stated that the on-going drought has caused the manure to persist much longer than it would have otherwise.

Liz Markiewicz said that there has been a significant increase in horse usage at these areas. A couple of attendees stated that they recently observed someone cleaning up trails. Kathi Breuer asked if bagging of the horse waste is feasible.

David Spears expressed his concerns that commercial interests may be involved. Dennis said that there is evidence some of the horse activity originates at the Wetherbee Farm.

Charlene and Norm suggested the possibility of requiring horse riders to voluntarily assume responsibility for removing the manure on a regular basis.

Bryon Clemence asked if the Commission is concerned about the impact of the manure on wetlands and water quality. Several Commission members stated they do not have such a concern.

Ed Whitcomb said he thought there shouldn't be any horses on the trails in the winter and spring "mud" season. Several people present stated that a number of trails have been "pretty chewed up" by the horses. A wildlife biologist stated she owns both dogs and horses and avoids certain areas. She said that different uses will impinge on each other.

Arden Veley reminded the Commission that when the Richards sold their parcel to the town, they negotiated that the parcel would be "horse friendly".

Charlene asked what other towns do to address this issue. Nina Veley said that Sudbury and Acton ask horse riders to "kick" the manure to the side of the trails.

Dennis said he would speak with Les Fox regarding Wetherbee Farm's use of the trails.

Ed Whitcomb proposed to extend and join the red and blue trails at Steele Farm and the Picnic Trust Land. There are approximately 8 tons of crushed stone available to improve the trail. DPW will do the mowing. The Commission expressed no objections.

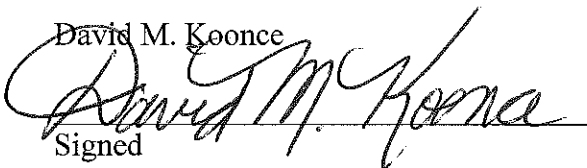
Discussion: 527 Old Harvard Road Conservation Restriction

Norm has visited the site. He will draft a letter to the owner stating the Commission's needs for an "As Built Plan" including limit of permanent clearing and proposed permanent delineation as required by Order of Conditions 113-320.

Motion was made by Hoff, seconded by David Koonce and voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

David M. Koonce

 Signed

 Date